

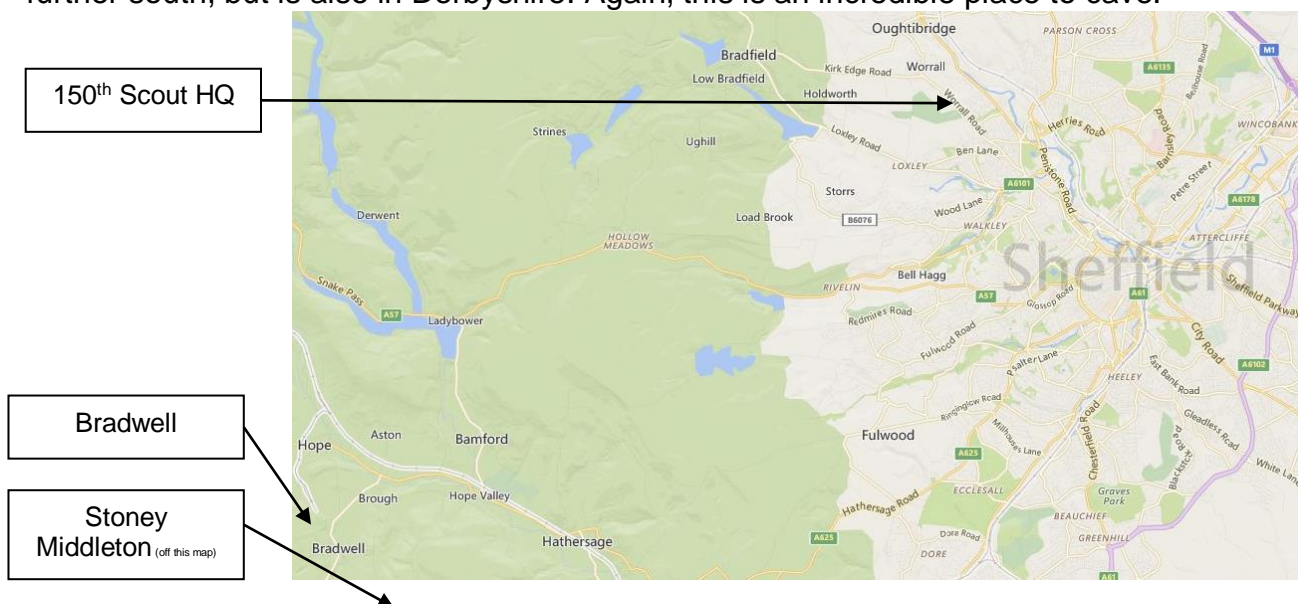
## An Introduction to Caving

Caving is a fun and exciting sport that takes people on an underground adventure between the rocks.

Caves have been formed by water wearing away the rock over millions of years. The water creates pathways and routes in the rock that people can explore.



We are going to the caves near Bradwell, in Derbyshire. This is one of the four best places in Britain to go caving. We are also going to Stoney Middleton. Stoney Middleton is further south, but is also in Derbyshire. Again, this is an incredible place to cave.



The instructor in charge will be part of Derbyshire Scout Caving Team. They have lots of experienced at taking groups of young people caving.

We'll split up into groups of 6 scouts. Each group will have a session that lasts for about 2½ - 3 hours. Not all of this time is spent in the caves because this time includes instructors giving safety instructions. It is important that everyone listens carefully to the instructions.



Because we are below ground, everyone gets given a helmet with a torch fixed on to it. This means that people don't need to take their own torch into the cave.



Because the torch faces forward, it shines light wherever you are looking. Some helmets have batteries fixed onto the helmet and some have a special belt to wear which carries the battery. It is the instructor's job to make sure that they all have plenty of charge so that the torch keeps shining all the time we are underground.

The temperature inside stays the same all year round at 8°C. Because you are doing lots of moving around, you can feel quite warm. It is best to wear a t-shirt, jumper and your waterproof jacket over the top.



When rain falls, some of it soaks into the ground and so there may be some water. The walls of the cave might feel wet, or it might be that there is water on the ground. Wearing boots is important. These could be comfortable wellies, or could be walking or hiking boots. The boots may get wet because of some of the water underground.

In the cave where we are going, the dryness will partly depend on how much rain has fallen. It will not be too wet though. It will be just like walking through puddles. We will not need to swim anywhere!

By the time we have finished, our clothes might be dirty. That's why we'll take some clothes with us to change into when we have finished. We'll also need an old towel in case we are wet, and a change of footwear.



As we walk through the cave the size of the pathway might change. Sometimes, the pathway is enormous. When this happens, we can walk normally. If the cave has a lower roof, we can still walk but will have to stoop down. There may be times when we do some crawling. It can be fun and good exercise when this happens. Some parts might be like the play area of Wacky Warehouse only made out of rock!



People are often amazed by the many wonderful things to see underground. Millions of years of water has left unusual and interesting shapes and patterns on the rocks.

